
A Decade in the life of Legislatures

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In the Spring of 1978 Pierre Trudeau was Prime Minister of Canada and Rene Levesque was Premier of Quebec. Other heads of government included Bill Bennett (British Columbia), Peter Lougheed (Alberta) Allan Blakeney (Saskatchewan) Sterling Lyon (Manitoba) Bill Davis (Ontario) Richard Hatfield (New Brunswick) Gerald Regan (Nova Scotia) Alexander Campbell (Prince Edward Island and Frank Moores (Newfoundland). In February of that year the Canadian Regional Council of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, composed of Speakers of the fourteen legislative assemblies, decided to found a newsletter to keep legislators informed of activities of the Association.

None of the presiding officers who attended the 1978 meeting are still in the Chair although two are still parliamentarians; John Brockelbank former Speaker in Saskatchewan, now a member of the Official Opposition in that province and Gerald Ottenheimer former Speaker of the Newfoundland House of Assembly recently named to the Senate.

The turnover rate among members in general has been about 75% over the ten year period. In March 1978 there were approximately 1131 members in the fourteen legislative chambers in Canada. Only about 301 of them were still in office ten years later. The figures by jurisdiction are as follows:

NWT	2
Yukon	1
House of Commons	112
Senate	47
British Columbia	11
Alberta	15
Saskatchewan	15
Manitoba	12
Ontario	31
Quebec	16
Nova Scotia	12
New Brunswick	8
Newfoundland	15
Prince Edward Island	4
Total	301

These figure do not take into account the case of members who were defeated and then returned or members who moved from one legislature to another.

Contrary to what one might expect there were as many former federal members who moved to provincial legislatures as there were ex provincial members elected to the House of Commons. In nearly every province one can find former MPs who moved to provincial politics during the last decade. For example Mark Rose (British Columbia), Peter Elzinga and Stan Schumacher (Alberta), Ralph Goodale and Doug Anguish (Saskatchewan), Bob Rae and Maurice Bossy (Ontario), Roger Simmons (Newfoundland), Wilbur Macdonald and Angus Macdonald (Prince Edward Island). Members who moved from provincial assemblies to the House in the last ten years include Sheila Copps, Michael Cassidy, Don Boudria (Ontario), Pat Binns, (Prince Edward Island), Gerald Merrithew (New Brunswick), Dave Nickerson (NWT), Lloyd Axworthy (Manitoba) and Gordon Taylor (Alberta) The Senate of course is a special case. Of the 57 Senators appointed since 1978 nearly half are former members of a provincial assembly or the House of Commons.

Over the years the Review has chronicled the comings and goings of parliamentarians at all levels. It has done much more as well. The cumulated index in this issue indicates the variety of articles that have appeared. These include studies on procedural reform, privilege, the office of Speaker, public accounts, electoral reform, the role of private members and many subjects which receive little attention by the popular press. We have also published articles relating to the constitution, political parties, conflict of interest, lobbying, language and other public policy areas.

The contents of previous volumes reminds one of the central role of legislatures in many of the most important political developments of the past decade – the debate over the referendum legislation in Quebec; the defeat of the Conservative Government in Ontario as a result of the Liberal/NDP Accord; the language debate in the Manitoba Assembly; the revival of the Conservative party in Saskatchewan; the Opposition filibuster in British Columbia culminating in the physical expulsion of the Leader of the



*Speakers, Clerks and observers at the 1978 meeting of the Canadian Regional Council of CPA
(Martine Bresson)*

Opposition; the debate over division in the Northwest Territories Assembly, the first election fought on party lines in Yukon; the election of a numerically significant opposition in Alberta; the debate over expulsion of a member in Nova Scotia; the Liberal sweep of all seats in the New Brunswick Assembly.

Many memorable events in the House of Commons have also been the subject of articles or reports in the Review – the defeat of the Clark Government in 1979, the bells crisis and 14 day boycott of the House of Commons; the report of the Lefebvre and McGrath committees on parliamentary reform, the resignation of Speaker Bosley and the election of his replacement by secret ballot of all members of the House; the issue of Senate reform; the impact of the Charter of Rights, the Meech Lake Accord.

The Review has undergone many changes over the years. In 1978 a provisional editorial board consisting of volunteers from Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and the House of Commons was established. Henry Muggah, Clerk of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly was elected Chairman and the first issue, published in June 1978 relied heavily on contributions from Board members and from the Library of Parliament. One other issue was published in 1978 and three more on an irregular basis the next year.

In 1980 the Parliamentary Library agreed to provide the services of an editor on a part time basis. An additional House of Commons position was allocated to production of the Review. The next few years saw a slow but steady transformation in the magazine. A new name was adopted – *The Canadian Parliamentary Review* – reflecting the enlarged scope of the journal as a forum for the exchange of

information relating to parliamentary institutions among members, staff and others interested in parliamentary affairs. Regular correspondents in several provinces agreed to provide information about activities in their legislative assemblies.

The production process also changed. The first issues were prepared on an electric typewriter and sent directly to the printer. The next step was typesetting, initially from typed copy and then with a wordprocessor. Later copy was coded and sent for typesetting via modem. In 1987 the Review converted to an in-house publishing system, becoming one of the first small magazines in Canada to move into the new area of PC based desktop publishing.

Prior to 1983 distribution was limited to parliamentarians and staff although the Review was sent free to others on request. As the contents began to appear in Canadian and American indexes the number of requests increased and a subscription price for non parliamentary readers was established. Many libraries and institutions in North America and abroad now subscribe. In 1987 an agreement with the Canadian Study of Parliament Group provided all members of that organization with a copy as part of their membership.

For more than a hundred years after Confederation, Canadian parliamentary institutions changed very little. In the last decade, and particularly since 1982 significant constitutional changes have set in motion further institutional and political changes. Parliamentarians are still in the process of coming to grips with some of these. The next decade in the life of legislatures should provide even more interesting material for future issues of the *Canadian Parliamentary Review*.◆